public of Congo (31%). Uganda's open-door policy can become more self-reliant.

Residents laud army over Bukoto-Kisalosalo road rehabilitation

By Nelson Kiva

The reconstruction of the Bukoto-Kisalosalo stretch linking to the Northern Bypass by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)'s Engineering Brigade, has sparked excitement among residents, business owners and road users. The road has been constructed under the directive of Chief of Defence Forces Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

BREATHING LIFE INTO BUSINESSES

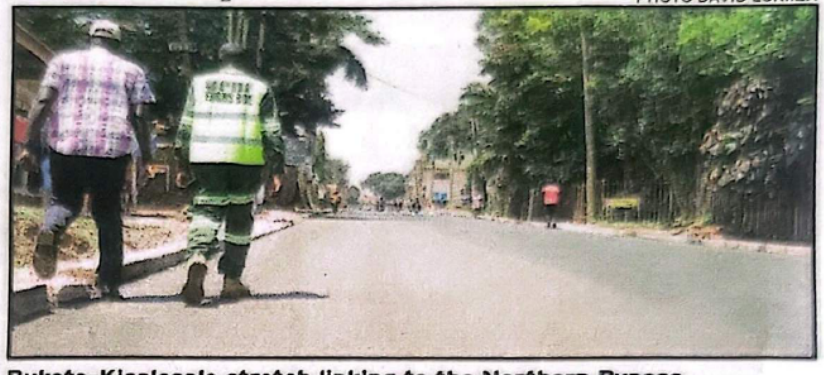
Residents say the project currently at 75% completion is already undoing their suffering and breathing life into businesses along the stretch.

The works on the road were commissioned in December 2025 following a CDF directive to the Engineering Brigadier Commandant, Lt. Col. Robert Namudongo to have the road worked on.

At Tohfa Restaurant and Bar in Bukoto, proprietor Johny Mallick recalls how the poor state of the road nearly forced him out of business.

"For two years, the road was in a terrible condition. Customers could not reach us and we were almost closing. Large potholes had taken over much of the road, leaving only a narrow passage that was frequently clogged with traffic. Access became so difficult that some customers opted to stay away altogether. Now, as rehabilitation progresses, normalcy is returning," he said.

PHOTO DAVID LUKIIZA



Bukoto-Kisalosalo stretch linking to the Northern Bypass rehabilitated by the UPDF's Engineering Brigade

"Customers have come back. Before, they had to park far away and we would deliver food to them, which increased our costs. Now they can drive in easily," Brian Bwayo, the restaurant's manager, said.

Mallick's story is similar for small-scale traders along the corridor. Benita Kyakuwa, who runs a boutique nearby, said the road's previous condition had driven away foot traffic and disrupted sales.

"There was a time vehicles could not pass at all because of the potholes. We lost many customers. When construction began in December, the temporary closure of the road worsened the situation, bringing business to a near standstill. But as sections reopened in phases, activity slowly resumed," Kyakuwa said.

She admitted she had considered relocating due to declining sales but changed her mind after witnessing steady progress.

FLOODING ADDRESSED

Beyond commerce, residents say the project has addressed a long-standing environmental hazard of flooding.

Hope Tumushabe, a resident of Mulimira Zone, said poor drainage had for years caused rainwater to overflow into homes and shops.

"Whenever it rained, water would flood into my house and nearby businesses," she said.

With the ongoing works, drainage channels have been widened and reorganised, significantly improving water flow. "Recently it rained heavily, and for the first time there was no flooding. That was a big relief," Tumushabe added.

Engineers on site say the transformation is the result of a comprehensive redesign of the road's structure, not just surface repairs.

"When we arrived, the road was in a very poor state. The drainage was inadequate, with individual channels feeding into a single line, and the road had large potholes that made movement difficult," Second Lieutenant Abraham Kato, an assistant engineer on the project, said.

He added that pedestrians were previously forced to share the narrow road with vehicles, creating safety risks.

"We have addressed these challenges by improving drainage, expanding sections of the road, and restoring proper traffic flow," he said.

Kato also praised the cooperation of the local community, noting that residents had been supportive throughout the construction process.

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